
PM: I didn't ask Ling to step down

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PETALING JAYA, Fri. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there was no truth to the rumours that he had asked MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik to step down.

"I have not said anything about this, I'm totally neutral. It is up to the MCA to decide who should lead them."

Dr Mahathir said he had no idea why such talks surfaced.

"Whatever decision (MCA take) depends on them, not me," he said at a Press conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang on his return from a working visit to Japan and South Korea.

On the on-going debate over the suitable intake system for public universities, he said the Govern-

ment would listen to the people to find out what they really want.

"If they want only STPM (Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia) we will agree. If there is a division among them, then we (Government) will have to decide," he said.

Proposals have been made for a single entry system be used unlike now where students are selected from STPM, matriculation and diploma holders.

On the possible replacement for Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia whose term as a Senator ended recently, Dr Mahathir joked that there were actually two vacancies.

"There are two, one of them is the Minister of Finance. If anyone is interested please inform me ...forms are available," he quipped.

On news reports that Malaysia was contemplating to buy US\$250 million (RM950 million) worth of Lebanese Eurobonds to assist the

West Asian nation to defend its sliding currency, Dr Mahathir, who is also Finance Minister, indicated that such a purchase was possible if Bank Negara felt it was viable.

Yesterday, a wire report from Beirut said Malaysia and Gulf nations including Saudi Arabia have committed over US\$500 million to help Lebanon defend its currency.

It said the money would be transferred into the central bank's foreign currency reserves either in the form of direct deposits or the purchase of Lebanese Eurobonds.

On the current tense situation between India and Pakistan, Dr Mahathir said both nuclear nations should settle their problems once and for all through the United Nations.

"Unless they do this, I think this situation will recur. The UN should play its role in solving such disputes, including that between Palestine and Israel."